

Performance Goals and Objectives for Indiana Postsecondary Education

April 11, 1997

This document begins the identification of state-level goals and performance objectives for Indiana's system of public postsecondary education. For anyone who has followed the Commission for Higher Education's performance reporting activities over the past 12 years, the objectives will seem very familiar. They focus on postsecondary participation and student success. What is different is the way these objectives have been determined and the way they are intended to relate to the institutions. Instead of being stated in ideal terms, they are modest, closely tied to institutional and demographic data. And, instead of being left at a statewide level of generalization, they will be translated into campus-specific responsibilities. Each campus will then be invited to provide its own best judgment regarding obtainable improvements. In the light of that information, the state-level objectives will be reviewed and amended as appropriate.

The first set of objectives seek to improve participation in and preparation for Indiana postsecondary education. They are stated in terms of progress to be made by 1999-2000, although the date could change and need not be consistent across all objectives. Each statement reflects progress desired for postsecondary education as a whole. Each is followed by analysis that provides a rationale for the proposed objective, including both Indiana and national data. The analysis also suggests possible, generalized, campus-level versions of the state-level objective.

In general the state-level objectives recognize that institutional performance as it pertains to students who enroll immediately after high school is already high. Objectives involving these students suggest comparatively modest improvements. The greatest levels of effort are proposed for objectives pertaining to adult students.

Subsequent discussions will introduce performance objectives that seek to improve retention and graduation rates; increase credit transfer, especially between Ivy Tech State College and the four-year institutions; and increase the institutions' engagement in economic development initiatives and initiatives to improve elementary and secondary education.

Performance Goals and Objectives for Indiana Postsecondary Education

Part I

Executive Summary

1. Recent High School Graduates

- a. College-Going Rate.** *By 1999-2000, fifty-eight percent of Indiana high school graduates will go directly on to postsecondary education in Indiana.*
- b. 21st Century Scholars.** *By 1999-2000, fifty-five percent of Indiana's 21st Century Scholars who graduate from high school will go directly on to postsecondary education.*
- c. Academic Preparation.** *By 1999-2000, ninety percent of all recent high school graduates who enroll in a four-year college or university will have completed Core 40.*

- 2. Adult Students:** *By 1999-2000, Indiana will attain a participation rate for adults 25 and older of 7.0 percent.*

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1. Recent High School Graduates

- a. College-Going Rate.** *By 1999-2000, fifty-eight percent of Indiana high school graduates will go directly on to postsecondary education in Indiana.*

Analysis

Indiana's 1995-96 statewide college-going rate for public high school graduates is 54.5 percent (see Table 1). When high schools are sorted by county, the county-specific college-going rate varies from 30.2 to 77.9 percent. Bringing the low college-going counties up to the state average would add about 2,100 students and provide a statewide college-going rate of about 58 percent. Bringing the statewide average up to 60 percent would add another 1,000 students.

Statewide efforts to increase the college-going rate of recent high school graduates are succeeding. Since 1987, the rate has moved steadily upward, increasing on average about one percentage point per year. As a result, Indiana's college-going rate now approximates the national average.

Fall 1994 national data rank Indiana 27th in terms of the number of recent high school graduates who move directly into postsecondary education (see Table 2).¹ In that year, the national average college-going rate was 57.0 percent, while Indiana's rate was 54.6 percent. Twelve states and the District of Columbia had college-going rates above 60 percent. In neighboring states the rates were: Illinois, 63.6 percent; Michigan, 60.0 percent; Kentucky, 55.2 percent; and Ohio, 51.4 percent.

One possible campus-specific objective under this heading would be the number of 1995-96 college-going students (1995 high school graduates) from each county within a campus's service area plus an additional number of students equivalent to raising the college-going rate for each service-area county to 55 percent. This could be generalized as: "Each campus will strive to obtain a college-going rate of 55 percent for graduates of high schools within its service area."

The state-level performance objective does not assign prospective students to specific campuses. What it does do is assign postsecondary encouragement and guidance responsibilities to the public campuses that claim responsibility for specific counties. Where multiple campuses claim a particular county, it is assumed that they will coordinate their responsibilities. It is also assumed that the

¹ Table 2 includes students matriculating at both in-state and out-of-state institutions. The rankings are based on a combined matriculation rate. If one looks only at students who matriculate at in-state institutions, the national data have Indiana ranking 17th at 46.9%, slightly ahead of the national average of 46.3%. See Table 2, column (e). By this measure, Indiana ranks behind Illinois, Kentucky, and Michigan, but ahead of Ohio.

residential campuses, which have statewide service areas, will be exempt from this objective unless they ask to be included.

- b. 21st Century Scholars.** *By 1999-2000, fifty-five percent of Indiana's 21st Century Scholars who graduate from high school will go directly on to postsecondary education.*

Analysis

The 21st Century Scholars Program promises tuition scholarships to any Indiana college or university for eligible young people who apply for the program and fulfill a commitment to the state. Ideally, the college-going rate for 21st Century Scholars would be identical to the rate for all Indiana high school graduates. Indiana and national data suggest that such a goal is not only ideal, but also, with one adjustment, appropriate.

Schools have no record of which of their students are 21st Century Scholars. They therefore cannot report how many Scholars receive diplomas. The State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana, which administers the program, can report how many Scholars affirm in their senior year that they are still Scholars in good standing and, by implication, plan to graduate and then pursue postsecondary education. At least for a time, these affirmations will have to serve as an approximate measure of diploma-receiving Scholars.

Fourteen hundred twenty-one members of the first cohort of 21st Century Scholars entered college in the fall of 1995. This represented 54 percent of those first cohort Scholars who affirmed when they were seniors that they were fulfilling their pledges.² In the fall of 1996, an additional 206 Scholars began using their first year tuition scholarships. They brought the first cohort's approximate college-going rate up to 61 percent (see Table 3).

A student's likelihood of graduating from high school and entering college varies directly with family income. Students from the lowest quartile of family income are least likely to do either one, although in the early 1990s their prospects of doing either or both increased. Census Bureau survey data for 1994 indicate that, of every 100 high school students with lowest quartile family incomes, 67 obtained diplomas and 39 -- or 58 percent of those graduating -- entered college (see Table 4). "College" here means baccalaureate-conferring institutions; counting enrollments at two-year institutions would raise the number. This information confirms that a performance objective for college-going 21st Century Scholars should resemble that for college-going high school graduates as a whole.

One possible campus-specific objective under this heading would be the number of 1995-96 college-going Scholars (1995 high school graduates) from within a campus's

² An additional 277 students enrolled in 1995-96 were identified as 21st Century Scholars but did not claim their awards. Presumably, this was because they enrolled as part-time students. The Scholars Program makes full-time enrollment one of its eligibility criteria.

service area measured against the total Scholar-affirming cohort for that region. Another possibility would be for several years simply to count college-going Scholars by campus, and add up the total as a percentage of the entire cohort of affirming Scholars for that year.

- c. Academic Preparation.** *By 1999-2000, ninety percent of all recent high school graduates who enroll in a four-year college or university will have completed Core 40.*

Analysis

No one knows what percentage of the students who entered Indiana colleges and universities in the fall of 1996 had completed the equivalent of the Core 40 high school curriculum. The closest approximation would be what Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) takers have said about their own academic preparation. The College Board reports that about 60 percent of Indiana high school graduates take these tests.

Indiana SAT takers are less likely than all SAT takers nationally to enroll in a rigorous academic curriculum (see Table 5). Data from 1996 indicate that, nationally, 91 percent of SAT takers enroll in 15 or more years of academic subjects (English, mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences including history, foreign languages, and fine arts including music). "One year" means taking one of these subjects for two semesters. Fifteen years covers a high school curriculum that satisfies Core 40 requirements.³ In 1996, eighty-six percent of Indiana SAT takers enrolled in such a curriculum.

All of the public institutions have indicated their strong support for Core 40. Some do not now require that level of preparation, however, and implementing such a requirement might take time. On the other hand, the two most selective campuses at Bloomington and West Lafayette already admit mostly students who have Core-40-like preparation, and they are large enough to pull the state-level objective higher than it might otherwise be.

Each institution is developing its own baseline information regarding how many entering freshmen have completed a curriculum resembling Core 40 as well as a plan for improving the percentage of admitted Core 40 students in those instances where improvement seems appropriate. Statewide, the Student Information System will be revised to include one or more data elements that characterize students' precollegiate preparation. This will allow state-level reports about Core 40-prepared, college-going students. The earliest year for which such statewide information will be available is 1997-98.

³ Core 40 includes four years of English, three years each of mathematics, science, and social science, and eight semesters of directed electives, plus health/safety, physical education, and additional electives. Directed electives include but are not limited to fine arts and music and foreign languages. A student who took Core 40 courses in the subjects shown and then devoted half of his or her directed electives to music and a foreign language would graduate with 15 years (30 units) of what The College Board calls "academic subjects." The student would also have completed the academic core of Indiana Core 40.

2. Adult Students. *By 1999-2000, Indiana will attain a participation rate for adults 25 and older of 7.0 percent.*

Analysis

“Adult participation” refers to the percentage of Indiana resident undergraduates aged 25 and above as a proportion of the total number of Indiana residents between the ages of 25 and 44. In 1995-96, the statewide adult participation rate was 5.9 percent, and the county-specific rate varied from 2.0 to 8.7 percent (see Table 6). Bringing the low participation counties up to the state average would add about 9,300 students and provide a statewide adult participation rate of about 6.5 percent. Bringing the statewide average up to 7.0 percent would add another 8,000 students.

Indiana’s adult population appears to provide a substantial opportunity for expanding postsecondary enrollment. 1990 Census Bureau data report that just 21 percent of Indiana adults 25 and older have obtained an associate or higher degree; the national average is 26.5 percent. On this measure, Indiana ranks 43rd out of 50 states (see Table 7). Any improvement in Indiana’s ranking requires addressing the educational needs of Indiana adults.

This is so notwithstanding the fact that the age profile of Indiana’s undergraduate enrollment is almost a mirror image of the nation’s. In the fall of 1993, adults 25 and older accounted for 36 percent of all undergraduate enrollment nationally (see Table 8). In Indiana in 1994-95, the comparable share was even greater at 37 percent.⁴ The message bears repeating, however, that if an Indiana goal is to increase the educational attainment levels of its citizens, postsecondary education will have to pay still more attention to older prospective students.

Adult students are likely to be placebound, commuting, part-time students. Not all institutions should be expected to serve this market. Insofar as many of these adults lack high school diplomas or adequate precollegiate preparation, they need basic skills instruction even more than postsecondary education. That further limits the number of institutions and campuses that should be asked to serve this population. Finally, some prospective adult students will best be served by non-credit-bearing courses or training opportunities. This performance objective does not involve such students. Adding new objectives pertaining to workforce development would be one way to acknowledge the importance of postsecondary, but non-credit instruction.

The regional campuses of Indiana and Purdue universities, the University of Southern Indiana, Vincennes University through its centers, and Ivy Tech State College should be asked to develop plans for expanded service to working adults. The other institutions and campuses should be understood to have missions that preclude serving this market except insofar as they choose to do so.

⁴ Unlike the national fall-term data, however, annualized data include students enrolled spring semester but not fall semester, and these are likely to be non-traditional, including older, students.

One possible campus-specific objective regarding adult participation would be the number of 1995-96 adult undergraduate students from each county within a campus's service area plus an additional number of students equivalent to raising the college-going rate for each service-area county to 7.0 percent. This could be generalized as "each campus will strive to obtain an adult participation rate of seven percent for residents of its service area."

Even among a short list of selected campuses, the state-level objective does not assign prospective students to specific campuses. Instead, it assigns postsecondary encouragement and guidance responsibilities to the public campuses that claim responsibility for specific counties. Where multiple campuses claim a particular county, it is assumed that they will coordinate their responsibilities. It is also assumed, to repeat what has been said, that the residential campuses will be exempt from this objective unless they ask to be included.

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Tables

1. [Indiana] College-Going Rates by County
2. [All States] Postsecondary Matriculation of Recent High School Graduates
3. [Indiana] College-Going Rates of 21st Century Scholars
4. [National] High School Graduation Rates and College Participation Rates by Family Income Quartiles, for Unmarried 18-24 Year Olds
5. [Indiana and National] Scholastic Aptitude Test Takers' Years of College Preparatory Subjects
6. [Indiana] Adult Participation Rates by County
7. [All States] Educational Attainment of Persons Age 25 and Older
8. [Indiana and National] Postsecondary Undergraduate Enrollment by Students 25 and Older